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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 010096

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF PNC CONTINUES

EMBASSY DAMASCUS REPORTS THAT THE PLO CENTRAL COMMITTEE MET IN DAMASCUS ON JANUARY 11, BUT FAILED TO AGREE ON WHETHER TO EXPAND THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL OR TO DECIDE WHEN IT SHOULD CONVENE. THE PCC WILL MEET AGAIN ON JANUARY 22 TO TRY TO RESOLVE THESE ISSUES. IN A JANUARY 13 PRESS INTERVIEW, PNC CHAIRMAN FAHUM STATED THAT:

--THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE DID NOT CONSIDER FORMATION OF A PROVISIONAL PALESTINIAN GOVERNMENT.

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--THERE IS URGENT NEED FOR MORE COOPERATION BETWEEN EGYPT, SYRIA, AND THE PLO.

ALTHOUGH FAHUM SAID HE STILL EXPECTS THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO CONVENE BEFORE THE END OF FEBRUARY, SAIQA LEADER MUHSIN HAS REQUESTED POSTPONEMENT UNTIL AFTER THE

ISRAELI ELECTIONS ARE HELD AND US POLICY BECOMES CLEARER.

EMBASSY COMMENT: WE SURMISE FROM FAHUM'S COMMENTS THAT THE ISSUE OF REPRESENTATION IN THE PNC WAS SUFFICIENTLY CONTENTIOUS TO PRECLUDE DISCUSSION OF OTHER TOPICS. (CONFIDENTIAL) DAMASCUS 308, 1/14.

2. CAIRO COMMENT ON ARAFAT'S THREAT TO QUIT

EMBASSY CAIRO REPORTS THAT THERE IS MUCH LOCAL CURIOSITY ON THE SUBJECT OF SECRET PLO/JORDANIAN CONTACTS, WHICH ARE SEEN IN THE CONTEXT OF ARAFAT'S RECENT COMPLAINTS OF "PRESSURES" ON HIM TO REORGANIZE AND REDIRECT PLO POLICY. RUMOR HAS IT THAT ARAFAT CONSIDERS HIMSELF IN THE MIDST OF AN ALL-OUT SYRIAN EFFORT TO EMASCULATE FATAH.

AN ARAFAT CONFIDENT REPORTEDLY COMMENTED TO A BRITISH EMBASSY OFFICER THAT:

--THE PNC WILL CONVENE FEBRUARY 15 IN CAIRO.

--ARAFAT WILL PROBABLY BE AUTHORIZED TO FORM A GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE "WHEN HE THINKS THE TIME IS RIGHT."

--THERE NEED BE NO PNC RESOLUTION ON THE ISSUE OF PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY IN LIBERATED TERRITORY, SINCE SUCH A RESOLUTION WAS PASSED IN 1974. (CONFIDENTIAL) CONFIDENTIAL

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CAIRO 00788, 1/14.

3. PORTUGAL: OPEN SEASON ON SA CARNEIRO

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PSD) PRESIDENT SA CARNEIRO HAS BEEN THE OBJECT OF A WHISPERING CAMPAIGN BY ADVERSARIES FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT HIS PARTY. RECENT PRESS REPORTS OF HIS MARITAL DIFFICULTIES AND ALLEGATIONS OF INTERNAL PARTY CHALLENGES TO HIS LEADERSHIP HAVE PROMPTED SOME PROMINENT PSD FIGURES TO EXPRESS THEIR CONCERN TO EMBASSY LISBON. THEY FEAR THAT EXPOSURE OF SA CARNEIRO'S MARITAL PROBLEMS COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE ATTITUDE TOWARD HIM HELD BY THE CHURCH AND THE PARTY'S CONSERVATIVE SUPPORTERS IN THE NORTH. SINCE THE PSD WILL LIKELY SUSPECT--HOWEVER UNJUSTIFIABLY--THE RULING SOCIALIST PARTY AS BEING BEHIND THE CAMPAIGN, THE RESULT IS LIKELY TO CAUSE FURTHER DAMAGE TO PS-PSD RELATIONS.

EMBASSY COMMENT: CLAIMS OF A WIDESPREAD MOVE TO DUMP SA

PSD POLITICAL COMMITTEE HAS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED TO
REPUDIATE THE PRESS ALLEGATIONS OF PARTY DISSENSION.
PARTY INSIDERS ALSO TELL US THAT ATTEMPTS TO EXPOSE SA
CARNEIRO'S FAMILY DIFFICULTIES WILL ONLY RESULT IN PSD
COUNTER-ATTACKS ON RIVAL POLITICAL LEADERS.(CONFIDENTIAL)
LISBON 378, 1/14.
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